

# ***FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** February 15, 2018

**Agenda Item:** Recovering America's Wildlife Act

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Endorsement

**Time Needed for Presentation:** 30 Min

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## **Background**

Recovering America's Wildlife Act legislation (H.R. 4647) was recently introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill is based on recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel for Conserving America's Wildlife. As proposed the bill would dedicate up to \$1.3 billion annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program. These funds would provide state fish and wildlife agencies with the resources needed to fully implement State Wildlife Action Plans, which are designed to conserve over 12,000 species of greatest conservation need. Under the current proposal, Montana's portion of the funding would amount to \$29.7 million annually, with a required non-federal match of 25% (\$9.9 million annually). Funds could be used for fish and wildlife conservation, wildlife conservation education programs, and wildlife associated recreation projects. Working with landowners, partner agencies and non-government organizations would be critical to identify high priority, cooperative projects and to explore sources of non-federal match. Passage of H.R. 4647 would not impact Montana's current allocation of Pittman-Robertson or Dingell Johnson funds.

## **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Upon Commission endorsement, FWP would continue development of Department priorities for this potential funding and potential sources of non-federal match. FWP will work with partners such as the Montana Wildlife Federation to ensure support for this legislation is considered by Montana's Congressional delegation.

## **Alternatives**

The Commission could rely on its previous resolution in support of similar legislation (H.R. 5650) signed August 11, 2016 to serve as support for H.R. 4647. However, a new resolution with signatures of current Commissioners and specific to H.R. 4647 would demonstrate clearer and more timely support for Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

## **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends the Commission endorse this proposal to demonstrate clear support of new federal funding for fish and wildlife conservation, wildlife conservation education programs, and wildlife associated recreation projects.

## **Proposed Motion:**

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission endorse signature of a resolution in support of Recovering American's Wildlife Act.